

**THE
UNITED
NATIONS
SOCIAL
AGENDA**

4



UNITED NATIONS

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Calendar of Special Days

11 July	World Population Day
8 September	International Literacy Day
18 September	International Day of Peace
1 October	World Habitat Day
10 October	International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
11 October	Universal Children's Day
16 October	World Food Day
24 October	United Nations Day World Development Information Day
Week of 11 November	International Week of Science and Peace
1 December	World AIDS Day
5 December	International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
10 December	Human Rights Day
11 December	Social Progress and Development Day



FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS: NEW DECADE

A US\$500 billion a year industry, the international drug trade functions within a complex network of producers, dealers, financiers and markets. Distorting national economies and destroying individual lives, this scourge can only be confronted by a multifaceted response.

In the Political Declaration, adopted in February 1990 by the United Nations, a new decade was proclaimed to fight drug trafficking and abuse on all fronts. Education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, narcotic control, law enforcement, financial regulation and economic development at the national level are the focus of the Programme and the decade.

Already an advisory and information centre on drug control strategies for governments, the United Nations system will intensify its programmes in all these areas.

During the new United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse from 1991 to 2000, the efforts of national NGOs remain vital. Primarily, NGOs can urge governments to demonstrate their political commitment by ratifying the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

POPULAR PARTICIPATION

Popular participation captures the spirit of the Declaration on the Right to Development which was adopted by the United Nations in 1986. It affirms that the free exercise of individual civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights is integral to development.

The International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa, held in February 1990, stressed the concepts of democratic development and the creativity and self-reliance of people. The African Charter that it adopted viewed the role of people and their organizations as crucial in designing policies and programmes to solve the economic and human problems of Africa.

4



However, conventions and strategies mark only the beginning of a process. They offer activists powerful points of reference. To be meaningful, conventions and strategies must take root nationally and locally.

NGOs can advocate that governments ratify and implement human rights conventions related to women, children, education, labour and discrimination. The Declaration gives policy-makers primary responsibility to liberalize decision-making processes. Nonetheless, individuals and NGOs must also champion their direct involvement in national planning within classrooms, townhalls, trade unions, professional associations and businesses if they are to exercise effectively their right to development.

MORE THAN HOUSING

Insecurity haunts a billion people worldwide. Homeless or surviving in hovels and slums, they are alienated people within their own societies. Adequate shelter would introduce stability and community involvement into their lives.

To meet shelter needs, the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements in 1988, will serve as the blueprint for action. The Strategy relies on the direct involvement of the private sector, NGOs, the homeless and slum dwellers at the local level. Its purpose is to make adequate shelter available for all by the turn of the century.

Throughout the 1990s, international organizations will continue to undertake varied projects which empower people. Ranging from the upgrading of slums to low-cost housing, the projects emphasize health care, education, access to credit and land ownership.

National action remains essential. NGOs can educate policy-makers about the linkages between shelter and sanitation, health, crime, the environment and economic growth. Most importantly, NGOs can advocate policies which make shelter central to development.



1995—A DECISIVE YEAR FOR WOMEN WORLDWIDE

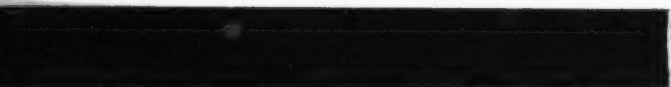
The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women has recommended a world conference in 1995 to review the progress made to improve the situation of women since the United Nations Decade for Women ended in 1985.

By 1995 women should hold 30% of all significant decision-making posts in government, the private sector, professional associations and NGOs. Pay equity policies should be implemented. Gender-biased textbooks should have been revised.

Each of these goals represents a challenge from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to all governments and activists committed to gender equality. The Commission's goals aim at galvanizing national action to implement fully the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, adopted in 1985.

A five-year review of the Strategies reveals that women have achieved legal equality in most countries, but not legal literacy. In short, women are still unaware of their rights and are unable to exercise them fully. Without such empowerment, women will consistently face discrimination in education, health care, nutrition, employment and political participation.





The challenges for 1995 may appear daunting. Yet, the journey to the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and to Nairobi began with the partnership of NGOs working at the local and national levels. NGOs can make the goals of 1995 a reality by keeping women's equality a burning issue before policy-makers.

REACHING EVERYONE

Education means empowerment. Yet, worldwide, the state of education is in crisis. 960 million adults, 75% of whom are women, are illiterate. 100 million children have no access to schooling. Basic education would equip individuals with the means to improve their lives.

In the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in March 1990, an alliance of United Nations agencies, NGOs, development institutions and educators have committed themselves to reverse the dismal trends in education. A Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs has been developed to serve as a guide for local, national and regional strategies.

Essentially, a new vision of education is needed to reach all children, youth and adults, particularly those outside formal institutions. Novel concepts of the classroom and new communication methods will be explored. Because basic educational needs vary, educators, families, students and policy-makers must work together to identify national priorities and goals.

Sustaining the momentum of the World Declaration is critical. NGOs can continue to involve disadvantaged groups—women, the poor, disabled people, the aged and minorities—by forming new partnerships in education projects. Reaching everyone is critical to social equity.

The United Nations Social Agenda provides NGOs and interested individuals with briefs on social issues being addressed by the United Nations system. Further information on the international strategies mentioned in this pamphlet and on other topics can be obtained from:

Economic and Social Development and Human Rights Programmes Section/CPMD

Department of Public Information
Room S-1040
United Nations
New York, New York 10017, USA

Or write directly to these addresses for further information:

Drug Control

Division for Narcotic Drugs
United Nations Office at Vienna
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Education and Literacy

World Conference on Education for All
Liaison Office of the ADG/Education
UNESCO
7 place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris, France

Shelter

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
P.O. Box 30030
Nairobi, Kenya

Women

Division for the Advancement of Women
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
United Nations Office at Vienna
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

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